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ABSTRACT

The Texas Library Connection (TLC) is a state-funded project that began in 1995. TLC is intended to provide a statewide electronic network for school libraries that provides a union database of school library holdings, access to commercial full-text databases, access to MARC cataloging records, and access to interlibrary loan functions. This paper studies TLC in terms of whether and how it has been used in school libraries of various sizes. In the spring of 1998, a questionnaire was distributed to a randomly selected sample drawn from TLC member campuses that joined during 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire was used as a part of data gathering. The study examines whether certain factors impacted the use of the TLC and looks at possible relationships between selected factors and the stages of concern of librarians who are TLC members. Findings are discussed in terms of the six research problems studied: (1) relationship between size of district, frequency of usage of TLC and type of usage of TLC; (2) relationship between TLC training and Stages of Concern (SoC) scores; (3) relationship between the type of usage of TLC and SoC scores; (4) relationship between the presence of district library leadership and SoC scores; (5) relationship between the type of Internet connection and frequency of usage of TLC; and (6) relationship between the presence of centralized processing in the district and type of usage of TLC. In a final section of additional findings, the paper concludes that TLC is making process toward its goals of providing equity of access and a variety of resources and services to students and library media centers in Texas. Includes seven charts and graphs. (AEF)

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The Texas Library Connection: Usage By and Concerns of School Librarians

The Texas Library Connection (TLC) is a state-funded project that began in 1995. TLC is intended to provide a statewide electronic network for school libraries that provides a union database of school library holdings, access to commercial full-text databases, access to MARC cataloging records, and access to interlibrary loan functions. Because of the time, effort, and money being expended on the project, I chose to study TLC in terms of whether and how it was being used in various-sized school libraries.

In the spring of 1998, a questionnaire was distributed to a randomly-selected sample drawn from TLC member campuses that joined during 1995-96 and 1996-97. The sample was stratified by size of district into four subgroups. The first group was librarians of districts with enrollment form 0-2,000. Group two had enrollment of 2,000-10,000; group three had a population of 10,000-25,000, and group four was districts with over 25,000 population. The population from which the sample was drawn was approximately 1,200 campuses, and the sample was approximately 25% of that number. Response rate was 52%.

In order to ground the study in a validated research framework, it was decided to use the Stages of Concern Questionnaire as a part of data gathering. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) is a part of a model of innovation adoption called the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The SoCQ has been widely used in education to measure the level of concerns that users experience during the change process when an innovation is introduced. The SoCQ measures seven areas of concern: Awareness, Informational, Personal, Management, Consequences, Collaboration, and Refocusing. Each area is scored on a scale of 1-100 with the score indicating the strength of the concern in that area.

This study attempted to ascertain whether certain factors impacted the use of the Texas Library Connection and to study possible relationships between selected factors and the stages of concern of librarians who are members of TLC. The research problems studied were: 1) the relationship between size of district, frequency of usage of TLC and type of usage of TLC; 2) the relationship between TLC training and Stages of Concern (SoC) scores; 3) the relationship between the type of usage of TLC and SoC scores; 4) the relationship between the presence of district library leadership and SoC scores; 5) the relationship between the type of Internet connection and frequency of usage of TLC; and 6) the relationship between the presence of centralized processing in the district and type of usage of TLC.

Research Problem One

Research problem one was intended to address the issues of how TLC is being used in different types of situations, specifically in library media centers in districts of differing sizes. It was felt that finding a variety of uses in differing situations would show that TLC meets varying needs for users. Findings for research problem one included: a weak relationship between size of district and frequency of usage of TLC; a moderately strong relationship between size of district and downloading of MARC records; but no relationship between size of district and the other functions of TLC; a strong relationship between size of district and most-used TLC function and size of district and least-used TLC function; and no significant relationship between frequency of usage and type of usage of TLC.

The strongest findings from research problem one were those dealing directly or indirectly with downloading MARC records. Again, a strong relationship was expected between size of district and use of MARC records for cataloging purposes. While librarians of all size districts are equally likely to purchase materials with catalog records accompanying them, librarians in larger districts are far more likely to have access to

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centralized processing of materials. Also, librarians in larger districts may have access to commercial databases of MARC records more frequently than librarians in smaller districts. Thus, librarians in larger districts are less likely to need to download MARC records for cataloging purposes. Numerical data show that downloading MARC records was the most-used function of TLC for subgroups one (0-2,000 in population), two (2,000-10,000) and three (10,000-25,000 in population).

In considering the relationship between size of district and frequency of usage of TLC, the researcher found a weak relationship, significant at $p \leq .05$, but not at $p \leq .01$. The largest percentage of frequent users was found in subgroup three, followed by subgroups one, two, and four in that order. Subgroup three was the smallest of the stratified subgroups and had the lowest percentage of return of any of the subgroups. The small sample for subgroup three may have affected the findings for that subgroup, with strong users of TLC being the most inclined to return the questionnaire. The researcher has more confidence in the findings for the other subgroups that show a pattern of decreasing frequency of use as district size increases. This finding is one that would be expected, as larger districts would be more likely to have a greater variety of internal resources that would lessen dependence on an external resource such as TLC.

Research Problem Two

Analysis of research problem two found a positive relationship between TLC training and means of SoC scores in that scores on stages 0-3 (Awareness, Informational, Personal, and Management) decreased for those persons who have had training. This finding is one that would be expected, in that training should lessen concerns in these areas. Scores on stages 4-6 (Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing) increased for those respondents with training. These stages are the impact stages, and it is expected that as scores on stages 0-3 fall, scores on stages 4-6 should increase. However, the difference in scores on stages 2-6 is relatively small, except for stage 5 (Collaboration)

which had a difference of approximately ten points. It should also be noted that scores on stages 0-3 remained relatively high, even for trained users, with all means for those stages being above 50% and stages 0-2 being above 60%. Based on these means, none of the users can be assumed to have moved into the "experienced user" category.

One finding of interest on this problem dealt with the relative high intensities of concerns on Stage 5 (Collaboration). The spike for Collaboration can be seen on all the graphs in this paper, and is consistent for both users and nonusers. This particular stage "pertains to concerns about collaborating with others to improve the outcomes of an innovation" (Hord, 1987). Stage 5 lies in the impact level that has to do with concerns about the impact of the innovation on students and consequences on learning. The other stages in the impact level are Stage 4 (Consequence) and Stage 6 (Refocusing), and both of these stages have relatively low scores for both groups.

One might speculate that the relatively high score on the Collaboration stage has to do with librarians' concerns about how TLC can be used with teachers in the curriculum. Another possibility is that the high level of concern is the result of the isolation that librarians feel, as they are frequently the only librarian in the building, or even the district. Hickox also found high scores on Collaboration in another study dealing with librarians. He noted that the highest level for every group of librarians in his study was on Collaboration (Stage 5).

Research Problem Three

Research problem three dealt with the possible relationship between type of usage of TLC and means of SoC scores. The average means of SoC scores were compared for the most frequently-used function of TLC and all reported uses of TLC for downloading MARC records, using commercial databases, use as an online catalog, and for interlibrary loan purposes. SoC score means for Stages 0-3 (Awareness, Informational, Personal, and Management) and for Stages 5 and 6 (Collaboration and Refocusing) were lower for

those users reporting that they most frequently used MARC records or online databases than for those users reporting that they most frequently used TLC as an online catalog or for interlibrary loan purposes. On Stage 4 (Consequence), the mean score for the group reporting most frequent use of TLC as an online catalog fell between the means for most frequent users of MARC records and online databases. SoC score means for all reported uses of the four functions were very similar between the four functions.

The number of respondents reporting that they most frequently used TLC as an online catalog or for interlibrary loan purposes was very small, being three and two respectively. One cannot place much confidence on results from such a small number of respondents. This author does not believe that any of the four functions requires more technical expertise, or familiarity with the system than any other use. The skills required are slightly different, but not enough so, in the view of the author, to impact concern levels.

Research Problem Four

Research problem four dealt with the relationship between the presence or absence of a librarian as district library administrator and means of SoC scores. There was an inverse relationship found, in that means for those respondents who did not have a librarian as administrator were lower on Stages 0-3 (Awareness, Informational, Personal, and Management) and higher on Stages 4-6 (Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing) than those respondents who reported have a librarian as district administrator. However, most differences were not large, with the widest spreads being on Stage 1 (Informational) and Stage 5 (Collaboration). The gap on Stage 1 was approximately eight points and that for Stage 5 was approximately eight points.

The author found the results on this problem to be somewhat inconclusive. Both small and large districts were found to have librarians as district administrators, although in the smallest districts the high school or district librarian usually also wore the hat of

administrator. Only in subgroup two did a majority of respondents indicate that they did not have a librarian as district administrator. The author had theorized that librarians as administrators were more likely to be found in large districts, that librarians as administrators were more likely to encourage use of TLC, and that librarians in districts with librarians as administrators were more likely to receive training on TLC. The results were not conclusive enough to support any of those hypotheses. One possible explanation could be that those library media specialists who do not have a certified librarian as administrator and who are active members of TLC were more proactive in seeking such membership and were more likely to use TLC. Thus, their scores would be expected to follow the pattern that was found.

Another possible explanation is that districts with librarians as administrators may have more internal resources available in the library media centers that would lessen dependence on TLC.

RESEARCH PROBLEM FIVE

Research problem five studied the relationship between the type of Internet connection and the frequency of usage of TLC. No significant relationship was found. The author had hypothesized that faster Internet connections might lead to greater usage, but this relationship was not supported by the findings. This particular issue may become redundant in a few years, as more and more schools upgrade their connections to support higher speeds of data transfer.

It is worth noting here, however, that a number of respondents did not have an Internet connection or had only recently gotten an Internet connection, despite the fact that an Internet connection was theoretically required for TLC membership. It was assumed that all TLC members had Internet connections when the study was designed. Fourteen respondents did not answer the question about type of Internet connection, and one could assume that most of these respondents, in fact, did not have Internet

connections. Sixteen respondents either did not answer the question about the number of computers in the library media center or reported having zero computers.

Research Problem Six

Research problem six dealt with the relationship between the presence or absence of centralized processing in the district and type of usage of TLC. Significant relationships were found between the presence or absence of centralized processing and the most- and least-used functions of TLC. The relationship between the presence or absence of centralized processing and all reported uses of MARC records was also strongly significant, as one would expect. A significant correlation was also found between presence or absence of centralized processing and all reported uses of commercial databases. No significant correlations were found between all reported uses of TLC as an online catalog or for interlibrary loan purposes and the presence or absence of centralized cataloging.

The correlation of MARC records and centralized processing is an obvious one. In districts with centralized processing, librarians do not need to do their own cataloging so they have no use for downloading MARC records. The finding regarding all reported uses of commercial databases is more puzzling. Other factors are obviously at work here, such as size of district, perhaps.

Additional Findings

Additional findings included a positive relationship between means of SoC scores and frequency of usage of TLC and a positive relationship between size of district and means of SoC scores, when frequency of usage was factored in. A comparison of scores for a typical non-user and the means of TLC non-users was made, and it was noted that they tracked quite closely, except for scores on Stage 5, Collaboration, where TLC non-users displayed an atypical spike.

One of the most interesting findings in the study was the atypical SoC means displayed on Stage 5 (Collaboration). This atypical spike is again present in the analyses conducted for the additional findings. Otherwise, the means of the SoC scores track more or less typically. The SoC scores for this group of respondents would overall place them in the novice category. Some researchers have speculated that it takes three years of usage to become an experienced user of any innovation for purposes of the Stages of Concern model. However, it is expected that only experienced users will display the higher scores on Stages 4-6, which are the stages that deal with impact on students rather than self. The school library media specialists in this study are typical in that they have relatively low scores on Stages 4 and 6, but are atypical in having the high Stage 5 score, although high scores on Collaboration were also found in another study involving academic librarians and persons who were experienced computing users.

In summary it should be noted that the Texas Library Connection was still in its infancy when this study was made. Although respondents could potentially have been using TLC for three years, in actuality about 57% had been using it for less time than that. As noted above, about a third did not use it at all. Most respondents in this study would be considered novice users or non-users of an innovation.

Respondents in this study reported a variety of uses of TLC. There is heavy use both of MARC records and the commercial full-text databases, leading this researcher to conclude that TLC meets a variety of needs among its users. Many respondents were very enthusiastic in their voluntary comments about the actuality and potential of TLC. As one put it, "I think TLC is the greatest program I have been exposed to. It has given our rural students advantages and opportunities which sometimes exceed those in an urban area, simply because there is a closer communication about resources being made available!"

TLC is making progress toward its goals of equity of access and a variety of resources and services to the students and library media centers in Texas. It is well on the way to indeed being worth the time, effort, and tax money being expended.

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Selected Charts and Graphs

Questionnaire responses for frequency of use

	Daily	Weekly	Biweekly	Monthly	Never	Other	Total
Group 1	4	4	3	5	7	1	24
Group 2	6	4	1	4	19	1	36
Group 3	2	6	3	6	2	1	20
Group 4	5	11	7	19	28	0	70
Total	17	26	14	34	56	3	150

All TLC functions used, by size of district

	MARC	Databases	Online Catalog	ILL
Subgroup 1	17	12	3	5
Subgroup 2	20	17	6	5
Subgroup 3	16	10	5	1
Subgroup 4	14	40	9	8
Total	67	79	23	19

TLC functions used the most, by size of district

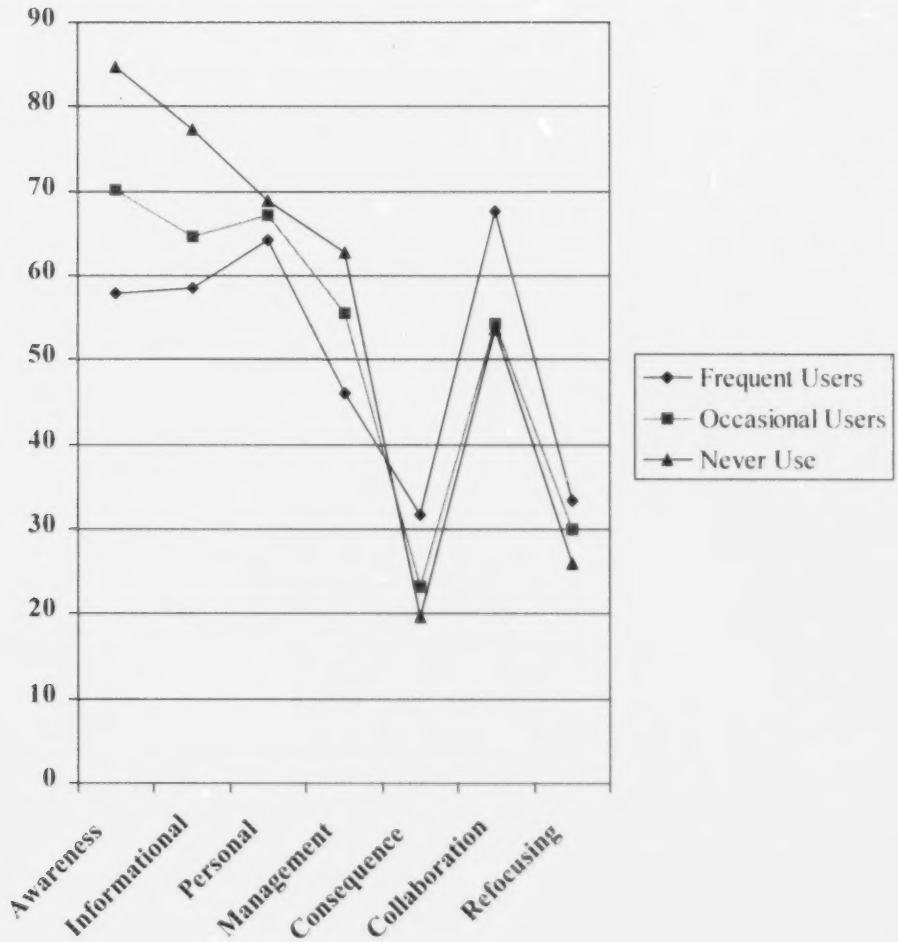
	MARC	Databases	Online Catalog	ILL	Total
Subgroup 1	**11**	**5**			**16**
Subgroup 2	**10**	**10**			**20**
Subgroup 3	**12**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**18**
Subgroup 4	**6**	**37**	**2**	**1**	**46**
Total	**39**	**56**	**3**	**2**	**100**

TLC functions used the least, by size of district

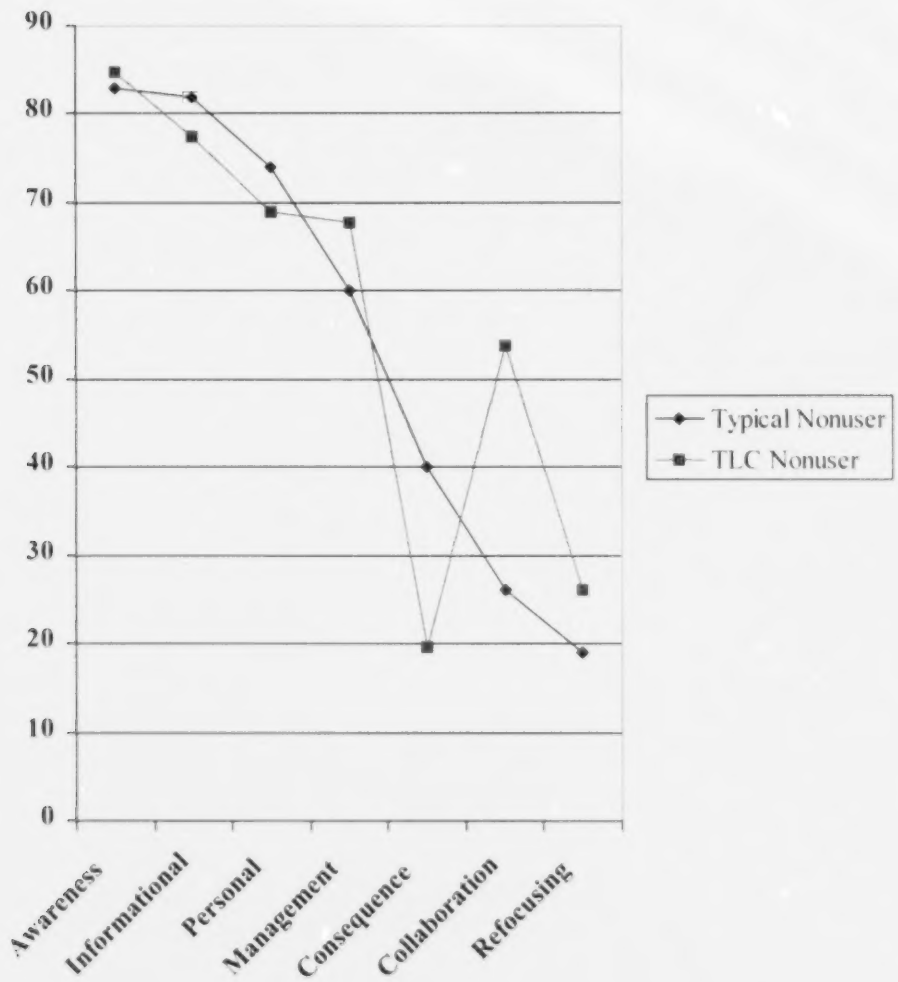
	MARC	Databases	Online Catalog	ILL	Total
Subgroup 1		**2**	**4**	**12**	**18**
Subgroup 2	**2**	**1**	**8**	**9**	**20**
Subgroup 3		**3**	**7**	**8**	**18**
Subgroup 4	**23**	**2**	**12**	**9**	**46**
Total	**25**	**8**	**31**	**38**	**102**

Presence of centralized processing and most frequently-used function of TLC

	MARC	Commercial Databases	Campus or District Catalog	Interlibrary Loan	Total
Centralized Processing	**8**	**37**	**2**		**47**
No Centralized Processing	**31**	**16**	**1**	**1**	**49**
Total	**39**	**53**	**3**	**1**	**96**



Comparison of SOC means by frequency of use.



Comparison of SOC scores for typical nonusers and TLC nonusers